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SPEECH
OF THE
HON. DANIEL WEBSTER,

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
UNITED STATES, ON THE 14TH JANUARY, 1814,

ON

A BILL

Making further provision for filling the ranks of the Regular Army, encouraging Enlistments, and authorising the Enlistments for longer periods of men whose terms of service are about to expire.

ALEXANDRIA :

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.....1814.....



SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER,

IT was not my intention to offer myself to your notice on this question. I have changed my purpose only in consequence of the course, which the debate took yesterday, on an amendment proposed by me, to one of the subordinate provisions of this bill. The observations to which that occasion gave rise have induced me, to prefer assigning my own reasons for my own vote, rather than to trust to the justice or charity of the times to assign reasons for me.

The design of this bill is to encourage, by means of a very extraordinary bounty, enlistments into the regular army. Laws already existing, and other bills now in progress before the house, provide for the organization of an army of sixty-three thousand men. For the purpose of filling the ranks of that army, the bill before us proposes to give to each recruit, a bounty of one hundred and twenty-four dollars, and three hundred and twenty acres of land. It offers also a premium of eight dollars to every person, in or out of the army, citizen or soldier, who shall procure an able bodied man to be enlisted.

Before, sir, I can determine, for myself, whether so great a military force should be raised, and at so great an expence, I am bound to enquire into the object to which that force is to be applied. If the public exigency shall, in my judgment, demand it; if any object connected with the protection of the country, and the safety of its citizens shall require it; and if I shall see reasonable ground to believe, that the force, when raised, will be applied to meet that exigency, and yield that protection, I shall not be restrained, by any considerations of expense, from giving my support to the measure: I am aware that the country needs defence, and I am anxious that defence should be provided for it, to the fullest extent, and in the promptest manner. But what is the object of this bill? To what service is this army destined, when its ranks shall be filled? We are told, Sir, that the frontier is invaded, and that troops are wanted to repel that invasion. It is too true that the frontier is invaded; that the war, with all its horrors, ordinary and extraordinary, is brought within our own territories; and that the inhabitants, near the country of the enemy, are compelled to fly, lighted by the fires of their own houses, or to stay and meet the foe, unprotected by any adequate aid of government. But shew me, that by any vote of mine, or any effort of mine, I can contribute to the relief of such distress. Shew me, that the purpose of government, in this measure, is to provide defence for the frontiers. I aver I see no evidence of any such intention. I have no assurance that this army will be applied to any such object. There are, as was said by my honorable friend from New-York (Mr. Grosvenor) strong reasons to infer the contrary, from the fact, that the forces hitherto raised have not been so applied, in any suitable or sufficient proportion. The defence of our own territory seems hitherto to have been re-

garded as an object of secondary importance, a duty of a lower order than the invasion of the enemy. The army raised last year was competent to defend the frontier. To that purpose government did not see fit to apply it. It was not competent, as the event proved, to invade with success the provinces of the enemy. To that purpose, however, it was applied. The substantial benefit which might have been obtained and ought to have been obtained, was sacrificed to a scheme of conquest, in my opinion a wild one, commenced without means, prosecuted without plan or concert, and ending in disgrace. Nor is it the inland frontier only that has been left defenceless. The sea coast has been, in many places, wholly exposed. Give me leave to state one instance. The mouth of one of the largest rivers in the eastern section of the union is defended by a fort mounting fourteen guns. This fort, for a great part of the last season, was holden by one man and one boy only. I state the fact on the authority of an honorable gentleman of this house. Other cases, almost equally flagrant, are known to have existed; in some of which interests of a peculiar character and great magnitude have been at stake. With this knowledge of the past, I must have evidence of some change in the purposes of administration, before I can vote for this bill, under so expectation that protection will thereby be afforded to either frontier of the union. Of such change, there is no intimation. On the contrary, gentlemen tell us, explicitly, that the acquisition of Canada is still deemed to be an essential object; and the vote of the House, within the last half hour, has put the matter beyond doubt. An honorable gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Sheffey) has proposed an amendment to this bill, limiting the service of the troops to be raised by its provisions; to objects of defence. To the bill thus amended he offered his support, and would have been cheerfully followed by his friends. The amendment was rejected. It is certain, therefore, that the real object of this proposition to increase the military force to any extraordinary degree, by extraordinary means, is to act over again the scenes of the two last campaigns. To that object I cannot lend my support. I am already satisfied with the exhibition.

Give me leave to say, Sir, that the tone on the subject of the conquest of Canada seems to be not a little changed. Before the war, that conquest was represented to be quite an easy affair. The valiant spirits who meditated it, were only fearful, lest it should be too easy to be glorious. They had no apprehension, except that resistance would not be so powerful as to render the victory splendid. These confident expectations were, however, accompanied with a commendable spirit of moderation, the true mark of great minds, and it was gravely said, that we ought not to make too large a grasp for dominion, but to stop in our march of conquest northward, somewhere about the line of perpetual congelation, and to leave to our enemies or others, the residue of the continent to the pole. How happens it, Sir, that this country, so easy of acquisition, and over which, according to the prophecies, we were to have been, by this time legislating, dividing it into states and territories, is not yet ours?—Nay, Sir, how happens it, that we are not even free of inva-

sion ourselves ; that gentlemen here call on us, by all the motives of patriotism, to assist in the defence of our own soil, and pourtray before us the state of the frontier, by frequent and animated allusion to all those topics, which the modes of Indian warfare usually suggest ?

This, Sir, is not what we were promised. This is not the entertainment to which we were invited. This is no fulfilment of those predictions, which it was deemed obstinacy itself not to believe. This is not that harvest of greatness and glory, the seeds of which were supposed to be sown, with the declaration of war.

When we ask, Sir, for the causes of these disappointments, we are told that they are owing to the opposition which the war encounters, in this House, and among the people. All the evils which afflict the country are imputed to opposition. This is the fashionable doctrine, both here and elsewhere. It is said to be owing to opposition that the war became necessary ; and owing to opposition also that it has been prosecuted with no better success.

This, Sir, is no new strain. It has been sung a thousand times. It is the constant tune of every weak or wicked administration. What minister ever yet acknowledged, that the evils which fell on his country were the necessary consequences of his own incapacity, his own folly, or his own corruption ? What possessor of political power ever yet failed to charge the mischiefs resulting from his own measures, upon those who had uniformly opposed those measures ? The people of the United States may well remember the administration of Lord North. He lost America to his country. Yet he could find pretences for throwing the odium upon his opponents. He could throw it upon those who had forewarned him of consequences from the first, and who had opposed him, at every stage of his disastrous policy, with all the force of truth, and reason, and talent. It was not his own weakness, his own ambition, his own love of arbitrary power, which disaffected the colonies. It was not the Tea Act, the Stamp Act, or the Boston Port Bill, that severed the Empire of Britain. Oh, no !—It was owing to no fault of administration. It was the work of opposition. It was the impertinent boldness of Chatham ; the idle declamation of Fox ; and the unseasonable sarcasm of Barre ! These men, and men like them, would not join the minister in his American war. They would not give the name and character of wisdom to that which they believed to be the extreme of folly. They would not pronounce those measures just and honorable, which their principles led them to detest. They declared the ministers' war to be wanton. They foresaw its end, and pointed it out plainly both to the minister and to the country.—He pronounced the opposition to be selfish and factious. He persisted in his course ; and the result is in history.

This example of ministerial justice seems to have become a model for these times and this country. With slight shades of difference, owing to different degrees of talent and ability, the imitation is sufficiently exact. It requires little imagination to fancy ones-self sometimes to be listening to a recitation of the captivating orations of the occupants of Lord North's Treasury Bench. We are told that our opposition has divided the government, and divided the

country. Remember, Sir, the state of the government and of the country, when the war was declared. Did not differences of opinion then exist?—Do we not know that this house was divided?—Do we not know that the other house was still more divided?—Does not every man, to whom the public documents are accessible, know, that in that other house, one single vote, having been given otherwise than it was, would have rejected the act declaring war, and adopted a different course of measures? A parental, guardian government would have regarded that state of things. It would have weighed such considerations—it would have inquired coolly and dispassionately into the state of public opinion, in the States of this confederacy—it would have looked especially to those States, most concerned in the professed objects of the war, and whose interests were to be most deeply affected by it. Such a government, knowing that its strength consisted in the union of opinion among the people, would have taken no step, of such importance, without that union; nor would it have mistaken mere party feeling for national sentiment.

That occasion, Sir, called for a large and liberal view of things: Not only the degree of union in the sentiments of the people; but the nature and structure of the government; the general habits and pursuits of the community; the probable consequences of the war immediate and remote on our civil institutions; the effect of a vast military patronage; the variety of important local interests and objects;—these were considerations essentially belonging to the subject. It was not enough that government could make out its cause of war on the paper, and get the better of England in the argument. This was requisite; but not all that was requisite. The question of War or Peace, in a country like this, is not to be compressed into the compass that would befit a small litigation. It is not to be made to turn upon a pin. Incapable in its nature of being decided upon technical rules, it is unfit to be discussed in the manner which usually appertains to the forensic habit. It should be regarded as a great question, not only of right, but also of prudence and expediency. Reasons of a general nature; reasons of a moral nature; considerations which go back to the origin of our institutions, and other considerations which look forward to our hopeful progress in future times, all belong, in their just proportions and gradations, to a question, in the determination of which the happiness of the present and of future generations may be so much concerned:

I have heard no satisfactory vindication of the war on grounds like those. They appear not to have suited the temper of that time. Utterly astonished at the declaration of war, I have been surprised at nothing since. Unless all history deceived me, I saw how it would be prosecuted, when I saw how it was begun. There is in the nature of things an unchangeable relation between rash counsels and feeble execution.

It was not, Sir, the minority, that brought on the war. Look to your records, from the date of the Embargo, in 1807, to June 1812. Every thing that men could do, they did, to stay your course. When at last they could effect no more, they urged you to delay your

measures. They entreated you to give yet a little time for deliberation, and to wait for favorable events. As if inspired for the purpose of arresting your progress, they laid before you the consequences of your measures, just as we have seen them since take place. They predicted to you their effects on public opinion. They told you, that instead of healing, they would inflame political dissensions. They pointed out to you also what would and what must happen on the frontier. That which since hath happened there is but their prediction, turned into history. Vain is the hope, then, of escaping just retribution, by imputing to the minority of the government or to the opposition among the people the disasters of these times. Vain is the attempt to impose thus on the common sense of mankind. The world has had too much experience of ministerial shifts and evasions. It has learned to judge of men by their actions, and of measures by their consequences.

If the purpose be, by casting these imputations upon those who are opposed to the policy of the government, to check their freedom of enquiry, discussion and debate, such purpose is also incapable of being executed. That opposition is constitutional and legal. It is also conscientious. It rests in settled and sober conviction, that such policy is destructive to the interests of the people, and dangerous to the being of the government. The experience of every day confirms these sentiments. Men who act from such motives are not to be discouraged by trifling obstacles, nor awed by any dangers. They know the limit of constitutional opposition—up to that limit, at their own discretion, they will walk, and walk fearlessly. If they should find, in the history of their country, a precedent for going over, I trust they will not follow it. They are not of a school, in which insurrection is taught as a virtue. They will not seek promotion through the paths of sedition, nor qualify themselves to serve their country in any of the high departments of its government, by making rebellion the first element in their political science.

Important as I deem it to discuss, on all proper occasions, the policy of the measures at present pursued, it is still more important to maintain the right of such discussion, in its full and just extent. Sentiments lately sprung up, and now growing fashionable, make it necessary to be explicit on this point. The more I perceive a disposition to check the freedom of inquiry by extravagant and unconstitutional pretences, the firmer shall be the tone, in which I shall assert, and the freer the manner in which I shall exercise it. It is the ancient and undoubted prerogative of this people to canvass public measures and the merits of public men. It is a “hallowed right,” a fire-side privilege. It hath ever been enjoyed in every house, cottage and cabin in the nation. It is not to be drawn into controversy. It is as undoubted as the right of breathing the air, or walking on the earth: Belonging to private life as a right, it belongs to public life as a duty; and it is the last duty, which those whose Representative I am, shall find me to abandon. Aiming at all times to be courteous and temperate in its use, except when the right itself shall be questioned, I shall then carry it to its extent. I shall then place myself on the extreme boundary of my

right, and bid defiance to any arm, that would move me from my ground. This high constitutional privilege, I shall defend and exercise within this House, and without this House, and in all places; in time of war, in time of peace, and at all times. Living I shall assert, dying I shall assert it, and should I leave no other inheritance to my children, by the blessing of God I will still leave them the inheritance of free principles, and the example of a manly independent, and constitutional defence of them.

Whoever, Sir, would discover the causes, which have produced the present state of things, must look for them, not in the efforts of opposition, but in the nature of the war, in which we are engaged, and in the manner in which its professed objects have been attempted to be obtained. Quite too small a portion of public opinion was in favor of the war, to justify it, originally. A much smaller portion is in favor of the mode in which it has been conducted. This is the radical infirmity. Public opinion, strong and united, is not with you, in your Canada project. Whether it ought to be, or ought not to be, the fact that it is not, should, by this time, be evident to all; and it is the business of practical statesmen, to act upon the state of things as it is, and not to be always attempting to prove what it ought to be. The acquisition of that country is not an object, generally desired by the people. Some gentlemen, indeed, say it is not *their ultimate object*; and that they wish it only as the means of effecting other purposes. But, Sir, a large portion of the people believe that a desire for the conquest and final retention of Canada is the mainspring of public measures. Nor is the opinion without ground. It has been distinctly avowed, by public men, in a public manner. And if this be not the object, it is not easy to see the connexion between your means and ends. At least, that portion of the people, that is not in the habit of refining far, cannot see it. You are, you say, at war for maritime rights and free trade. But they see you lock up your commerce and abandon the ocean. They see you invade an interior province of the enemy. They see you involve yourselves in a bloody war with the native savages: and they ask you, if you have, in truth, a maritime controversy with the western Indians, and are really contending for Sailors' rights with the tribes of the Prophet? In my judgment, the popular sentiment, in this case, corresponds with the soundest political discretion. In my humble opinion, you are not only not able to travel in the road you have taken, but if you were, it would not conduct you to your object:

I am aware, Sir, that both the professed objects of the war, and the manner of prosecuting it, may receive the nominal approbation of a great majority of those, who constitute the prevailing party in the country. But I know also how extremely fallacious any inference from that circumstance would be, in favor of the real popularity of the measure. In times like these, a great measure of a prevalent party becomes incorporated with the party interest. To quarrel with the measure, would be to abandon the party. Party considerations, therefore, induce an acquiescence in that, on which the fate of party is supposed to depend. Gentlemen, Sir, fall into

strange inconsistencies on this subject. They tell us that the war is popular; that the invasion of Canada is popular, and that it would have succeeded, before this time, had it not been for the force of opposition. Sir, what gives force to opposition in this country? Certainly nothing but the popularity of the cause of opposition, and the numbers who espouse it. Upon this argument, then, in what an unprecedented condition are the people of these States! We have on our hands a most popular war; we have also a most popular opposition to that war. We cannot push the measure, the opposition is so popular. We cannot retract it, the measure itself is so popular. We can neither go forward, nor backward. We are at the very centre of gravity;—the point of perpetual rest!

The truth is, Sir, that party support is not the kind of support necessary to sustain the country through a long, expensive and bloody contest; and this should have been considered, before the war was declared. The cause, to be successful, must be upheld by other sentiments, and higher motives. It must draw to itself the sober approbation of the great mass of the people. It must enlist, not their temporary or party feelings, but their steady patriotism, and their constant zeal. Unlike the old nations of Europe, there are in this country no dregs of population, fit only to supply the constant waste of war, and out of which an army can be raised for hire, at any time, and for any purpose. Armies of any magnitude can here be nothing but the people embodied; and if the object be not one for which the people will embody, there can be no armies. It is, I think, too plain to be doubted, that the conquest of Canada is such an object. They do not feel the impulse of adequate motive. Not unmindful of military distinction, they are yet not sanguine of laurels in this contest. The harvest, thus far, they perceive has not been great. The prospect of the future is no greater. Nor are they altogether reconciled to the principle of this invasion. Canada, they know, is not to be conquered, but by drenching its soil in the blood of its inhabitants. They have no thirst for that blood. The borderers, on the line, connected by blood and marriage, and all the ties of social life, have no disposition to bear arms against one another. Merciless indeed has been the fate of some of these people. I understand it to be fact, that in some of the affairs, which we call battles, because we have had nothing else to give the name to, brother has been in arms against brother. The bosom of the parent has been exposed to the bayonet of his own son. Sir, I honor the people that shrink from a warfare like this. I applaud their sentiments and their feelings. They are such as religion and humanity dictate, and such as none but cannibals would wish to eradicate from the human heart.

You have not succeeded in dividing the people of the provinces from their government. Your commanders tell you that they are universally hostile to your cause. It is not, therefore, to make war on their government; it is to make war, fierce, cruel, bloody war on the people themselves, that you call to your standard the yeomanry of the Northern States. The experience of two campaigns should have taught you, that they will not

obey that call. Government has put itself in every posture. It has used supplication and intreaty; it has also menaced and it still menaces, compulsion. All is in vain. It cannot longer conceal its weakness on this point. Look to the bill before you. Does not that speak a language exceeding every thing I have said? You last year gave a bounty of sixteen dollars. You now propose to give a bounty of one hundred and twenty four dollars, and you say you have no hope of obtaining men at a lower rate. This is sufficient to convince me, it will be sufficient to convince the enemy, and the whole world, yourselves only excepted, what progress your Canada war is making in the affections of the people.

It is to no want of natural resources, or natural strength, in the country, that your failures can be attributed. The Northern States alone are able to overrun Canada in thirty days, armed or unarmed, in any cause which should propel them by inducements sufficiently powerful. Recur, Sir, to history. As early as 1745, the New-England colonies raised an army of five thousand men, and took Louisburg from the troops of France. On what point of the enemy's territory, let me ask, have you brought an equal force to bear in the whole course of two campaigns? On another occasion, more than half a century ago, Massachusetts alone, although its population did not exceed one third of its present amount, had an army of twelve thousand men. Of these, seven thousand were at one time employed against Canada. A strong motive was then felt to exist. With equal exertion, that commonwealth could now furnish an army of forty thousand men.

You have prosecuted this invasion for two campaigns: They have cost you more, upon the average, than the campaigns of the revolutionary war. The project has already cost the American people nearly half as much as the whole price paid for independence. The result is before us. Who does not see and feel, that this result disgraces us? Who does not see in what estimation our martial prowess must be by this time holden, by the enemy, and by the world? Administration has made its master effort to subdue a province, three thousand miles removed from the mother country; lying at our own doors; scarcely equal in natural strength, to the least of the states of this confederacy, and defended by external aid to a limited extent. It has persisted two campaigns—and it has failed. Let the responsibility rest where it ought. The world will not ascribe the issue to want of spirit or patriotism in the American people: The possession of those qualitics, in high and honorable degrees, they have heretofore illustriously evinced, and spread out the proof on the record of their Revolution. They will be still true to their character, in any cause which they feel to be their own. In all causes, they will defend themselves. The enemy, as we have seen, can make no permanent stand, in any populous part of the country. Its citizens will drive back his forces to the line. But at that line, at the point where defence ceases, and invasion begins, they stop. They do not pass it, because they do not chuse to pass it. Offering no serious obstacle to their actual power, it rises, like a Chinese wall, against their sentiments and their feelings.

It is natural, Sir, such being my opinions, on the present state of things, that I should be asked what, in my judgment, ought to be done. In the first place, then, I answer, withdraw your invading armies, and follow councils which the national sentiment will support. In the next place, abandon the system of commercial restriction. That system is equally ruinous to the interests, and obnoxious to the feelings of whole sections and whole states. They believe you have no constitutional right to establish such systems. They protest to you, that such is not, and never was, their understanding of your powers. They are sincere in this opinion, and it is of infinite moment, that you duly respect that opinion, although you may deem it to be erroneous. These people, Sir, resisted Great-Britain, because her minister, under pretence of regulating trade, attempted to put his hand into their pockets, and get their money. There is that, Sir, which they then valued, and which they still value, ~~more~~ than money. That pretence of regulating trade they believed to be a mere cover for tyranny and oppression. The present embargo, which does not vex, and harass, and embarrass their commerce, but annihilates it, is also laid by color of a power to regulate trade. For if it be not laid, by virtue of this power, it is laid by virtue of no power. It is not wonderful, Sir, if this should be viewed by them as a state of things, not contemplated when they came into the national compact.

Let me suppose, Sir, that when the Convention of one of the commercial states, Massachusetts for example, was deliberating on the adoption of this Constitution, some Person, to whose opening vision the future had been disclosed, had appeared among them. He would have seen there the Patriots who rocked the cradle of liberty in America. He would have seen there statesmen and warriors, who had borne no dishonorable parts in the councils of their country, and on her fields of battle. He would have found those men recommending the adoption of this Instrument to a people, full of the feeling of independence, and naturally jealous of all governments but their own. And he would have found, that the leading, the principal, and the finally prevalent argument, was the *protection and extension of commerce*.

Now suppose, Sir, that this Person, having the knowledge of future times, had told them—"This Instrument, to which you now commit your fates, shall for a time not deceive your hopes. Administered and practised, as you now understand it, it shall enable you to carry your favorite pursuits to an unprecedented extent. The increase of your numbers, of your wealth, and of your general prosperity, shall exceed your expectations. But other times shall arrive. Other councils shall prevail. In the midst of this extension and growth of commerce and prosperity, an Embargo, severe and universal, shall be laid upon you, for eighteen months. This shall be succeeded by non-importations, restrictions and embarrassments, of every description. War, with the most powerful maritime nation on earth, shall follow. This war shall be declared professedly for your benefit, and the protection of your interest. It shall be declared nevertheless *against* your urgent remonstrance. Your voice

shall be heard, but it shall be heard only to be disregarded. It shall be a war for sailors' rights, against the sentiments of those to whom eight tenths of the seamen of the country belong. It shall be a war for maritime rights forced upon those who are alone interested in such concerns. It shall be brought upon you by those to whom seamen and commerce shall be alike unknown; who shall never have heard the surges of the sea; and into whose minds the idea of a ship shall never have entered, through the eye, till they shall come, from beyond the western hills, to take the protection of your maritime rights, and the guardianship of your commercial interests, into their skillful and experienced hands. Bringing the enemy to the blockade of your ports, they shall leave your coasts to be undefended, or defended by yourselves. Mindful of what may yet remain of your commerce, they shall visit you with another Embargo. They shall cut off your intercourse of every description with foreign nations. This not only; they shall cut off your intercourse of every description by water, with your sister states. This not only; they shall cut off your intercourse of every description by water, between the ports of your own states. They shall seize your accustomed commerce, in every limb, nerve, and fibre, and hold it, as in the jaws of death."

I now put it to you, Sir, whether if this practical administration of the constitution had been laid before them, they would have ratified it—I ask you, if the hand of Hancock himself would not sooner have committed it to the flames?—If then, Sir, they did not believe, and from the terms of the instrument had no reason to believe, that it conferred such powers on the government, then, I say, the present course of its administration is not consistent with its spirit and meaning.

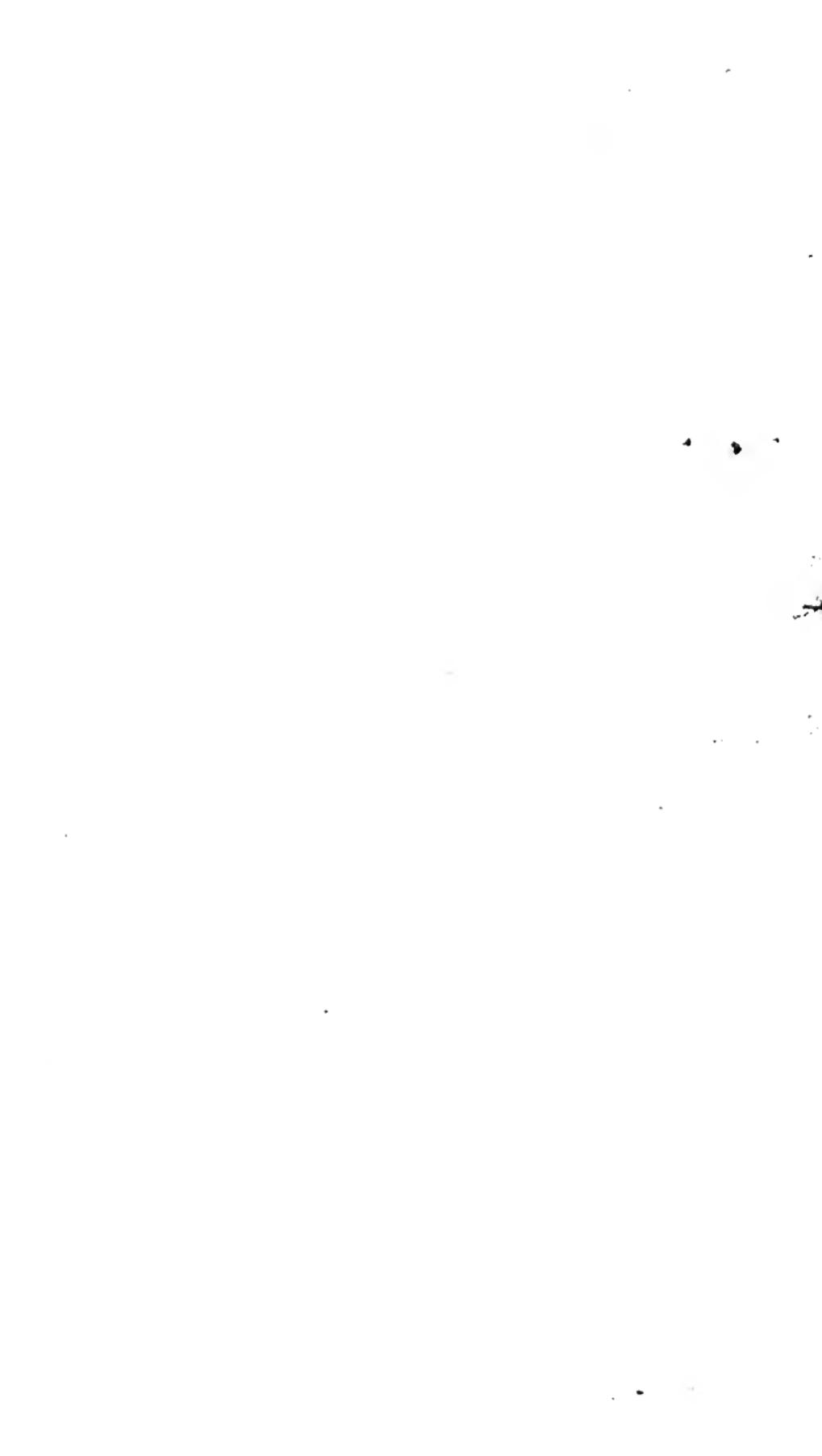
Let any man examine our history, and he will find that the constitution of the country owes its existence to the commerce of the country. Let him inquire of those who are old enough to remember, and they will tell it to him. The idea of such a compact, as is well known, was first unfolded in a meeting of Delegates from different states holden for the purpose of making some voluntary agreements respecting trade, and establishing a common tariff. I see near me an honorable and venerable Gentleman (Mr. Schureman, of New-Jersey,) who bore a part in the deliberations of that assembly, and who put his hand to the first recommendation, ever addressed to the people of these States by any body of men, to form a national constitution. He will vouch for the truth of my remark. He will tell you the motives which actuated him, and his associates, as well as the whole country, at that time. The faith of this nation is pledged to its commerce, formally and solemnly. I call upon you to redeem that pledge; not by sacrificing, while you profess to regard it; but by un-hackling it, and protecting it, and fostering it, according to your ability, and the reasonable expectations of those who have committed it to the care of government. In the commerce of the country, the constitution had its birth. In the extinction of that commerce, it will find its grave. I use not the tone of intimidation or menace, but I forewarn you of consequences. Let it

be remembered, that in my place, this day, and in the discharge of my public duty, I conjure you to alter your course. I urge to you the language of entreaty. I beseech you, by your best hopes of your country's prosperity;—by your regard for the preservation of her government, and her union;—by your own ambition, as honorable men, of leading hereafter in the councils of a great and growing empire;—I conjure you, by every motive which can be addressed to the mind of man, that you abandon your system of restrictions—that you abandon it at once—and abandon it forever.

The humble aid, which it would be in my power to render to measures of government, shall be given cheerfully, if government will pursue measures which I can conscientiously support. Badly as I think of the original grounds of the war, as well as of the manner in which it has been hitherto conducted, if even now, failing in an honest and sincere attempt to procure just and honorable peace it will return to measures, of defence and protection, such as reason, and common sense, and the public opinion all call for, my vote shall not be withheld from the means. Give up your futile projects of invasion. Extinguish the fires that blaze on your inland frontiers. Establish perfect safety and defence there, by adequate force. Let every man that sleeps on your soil sleep in security. Stop the blood that flows from the veins of unarmed yeomanry, and women and children. Give to the living time to bury and lament their dead, in the quietness of private sorrow. Having performed this work of beneficence and mercy on your inland border, turn, and look with the eye of justice and compassion on your vast population along the coast. Unclench the iron grasp of your Embargo. Take measures for that end, before another sun sets upon you. With all the war of the enemy on your commerce, if you would cease to war it on yourselves, you would still have some commerce. That commerce would give you some revenue. Apply that revenue to the augmentation of your navy: That navy, in turn, will protect your commerce. Let it no longer be said, that not one ship of force, built by your hands since the war, yet floats upon the ocean. Turn the current of your efforts into the channel which national sentiment has already worn broad and deep to receive it. A naval force, competent to defend your coast against considerable armaments, to convoy your trade, and perhaps raise the blockade of your rivers, is not a chimera. It may be realized. If, then, the war must continue, go to the ocean. If you are seriously contending for maritime rights, go to the theatre where alone those rights can be defended. Thither every indication of your fortunes points you. There the united wishes and exertions of the nation will go with you. Even our party divisions, acrimonious as they are, cease at the water's edge. They are lost in attachment to national character, on that element, where that character is made respectable. In protecting naval interests by naval means, you will arm yourselves with the whole power of national sentiment, and may command the whole abundance of the national resources. In time you may enable yourselves to redress injuries, in the place where they may be offered, and if need be, to accompany your own flag throughout the world, with the protection of your own cannon.









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